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ABSTRACT

Describing outcomes related to student retention and graduation in the University System of Georgia, this six-part report discusses definitions and assumptions pertaining to retention and compares success rates for black, white, developmental studies, and regularly-admitted freshmen students in USG senior and two-year colleges. Section 1 provides an overview of student retention and reviews findings from national and state retention studies. Section 2 focuses on first-year retention of first-time full-time students by institution, race, and admission status, indicating that systemwide senior colleges had a 71.1% and two-year colleges a 58.2% retention rate for 1992-93. Section 3 discusses multiple-year retention of first-time full-time students by institution, race, and admission status, revealing a fall 1984 through fall 1993 retention rate of 56.4% for senior institutions and 42% for two-year institutions. Section 4 focuses on bachelor's degree graduation of first-time full-time students by institution, race, and admission status, indicating that systemwide, 24.3% of the fall 1984 black developmental students graduated after 9 years, compared to 31.1% of other races. Finally, section 5 describes USG programs designed to improve student retention by counteracting the major causes of attrition, including developmental studies, student support services, minority student support, freshman orientation, peer assistance programs, academic intervention, counseling centers, honors programs, academic advisement, and financial aid, while section 6 provides a summary and conclusions. (TGI)

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ED 387 197

Student Retention and Graduation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. • Student retention is the process of keeping students enrolled until they complete their higher education objectives. One hundred percent retention and graduation is not an achievable goal because of the broad range of students admitted and because of the many causes of attrition that are beyond an institution's control.

   • Institutions can determine the most prevalent causes of attrition for their students, and programs can be implemented to mitigate those causes and increase the rate of student retention. The effectiveness of those programs also can be evaluated and improved as needed.

2. • The collective 1992-93 first-year, *same institution* retention rate for senior colleges and universities was 71.1 percent, and only 3 of the 18 senior colleges and universities included in this report met or exceeded that overall rate.

   • The 1992-93 *same institution* retention rate for System two-year colleges was approximately 58.2 percent, and 6 of the 15 two-year colleges met or exceeded that overall rate.

   • Calculated *Systemwide*, overall senior college and university first-year retention was 78.9 percent for 1992-93; the corresponding two-year college rate was 65.4 percent.

3. • Comparing University System of Georgia retention and graduation rates with those of the University of North Carolina, California State University, State University of New York and University of Wisconsin systems, Georgia's 1-year and 9-year retention rates are highest, but the its 5-year and 9-year bachelor's degree graduation rates are third-highest in that comparison group.

   • One national study calculates a six-year bachelor's degree graduation rate for first-time full-time students of 43 percent; the comparable University System rate is 45 percent.

4. • There are consistently larger retention and graduation rate disparities between admission categories than between the black and other student subgroups within those categories, with regularly admitted freshmen of both races and all types of institutions being retained and graduated at much higher rates than developmental studies students (Two-thirds of Fall 1984 entering black students and one-fourth of white students were developmental studies).

   • The gap between black students and white students within admission categories becomes greater over time.

   • *Systemwide*, 24.3 percent of the Fall 1984 black developmental studies students graduated after nine years compared to 31.1 percent of their white counterparts. The corresponding rates for regularly admitted freshmen were 53.1 percent for black students and 62.9 percent for white students.

5. • Nine years after Fall 1984 admission, 43.2 percent of entering first-time full-time students were enrolled or had graduated from the same institution they first entered.

   • Approximately 56.4 percent of that same entering class were still enrolled or had graduated from their original or any other System institution after nine years. Six institutions meet or exceed that rate; 27 have a lower nine-year, *Systemwide* retention rate.

   • By summer 1993, the collective *Systemwide* graduation rate for the Fall 1984 entering class was 51.9 percent, a rate that only four senior colleges or universities equalled or exceeded.

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INTRODUCTION

This report on *Student Retention and Graduation in the University System of Georgia* presents data on retention from the first to the second fall quarter of enrollment (*First-Year Retention*), from the first through several subsequent fall quarters of enrollment (*Multiple-Year Retention*), and on the rates at which students graduate from System senior colleges and universities (*Bachelor's Degree Graduation*).

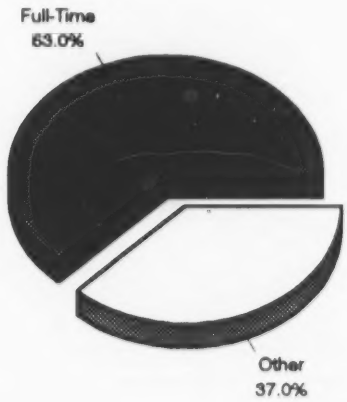
In each of those areas, the comparative success of black students and white students and developmental studies students and regularly-admitted freshmen is examined. The report also discusses definitions and assumptions pertaining to student retention and graduation, the major causes of student attrition, and institutional programs designed to improve student retention and success.

SECTION 1
AN OVERVIEW OF STUDENT RETENTION

What is Student Retention?

Student retention is student persistence from matriculation through subsequent quarters of college enrollment to degree program completion and graduation. In this report, retention is defined as being currently enrolled at or having graduated from a University System institution. If the rates are labelled *same institution*, both enrollment and graduation must be at the matriculating institution. The rates are labelled *Systemwide* when the retained students are enrolled at or have graduated from any System institution. Retention rates are calculated here for first-time full-time entering students. At most System institutions, a large majority of first-time students enroll full-time. The following figure illustrates the approximate proportion of full-time entering students for the total System.

Figure 1 - First-Time Entering Students



Attrition is the term for failure to persist in college after matriculation. A *dropout* is someone who permanently leaves college without obtaining a degree. A *stopout* is a student who persists in college study and the pursuit of a degree over a longer than average period of time, with intermittent quarters or even years in which he or she is not enrolled. In this report, stopouts and dropouts are not tracked separately; that is an option that individual institutions might pursue to gain insights into student retention/attrition behavior. For the purposes of this study, students in a given class cohort either are or are not recorded as retained in a subsequent fall quarter.

The *traditional* college student graduates from high school in the Spring and enrolls as a full-time college student the following Fall with the intention of earning a bachelor's degree from the enrolling institution in four to five years of continuous study. However, the story of student retention includes many exceptions to the traditional student model. Students enroll in college for a variety of reasons, with a variety of objectives, and at different times during their adult lives.

Many college students do not begin college in the first fall quarter after high school graduation; many do not enroll as full-time students; and many enroll without specific degree aspirations. Still other students enter college seeking short-term goals, knowing that they do not intend to pursue a degree.

Student retention and its ultimate form, bachelor's degree graduation, are heavily influenced by the type of institution at which students first enroll. Two-year colleges not only have a mission to transfer students to four-year colleges, but they also offer one-year certificates and two-year career associate degrees that many students pursue as their terminal higher education goal. Residential senior colleges and universities enjoy relatively higher student retention rates than commuter institutions. Institutions that admit freshmen with higher average SAT scores and high school GPA's generally retain a higher proportion of those students.

Why Study Student Retention?

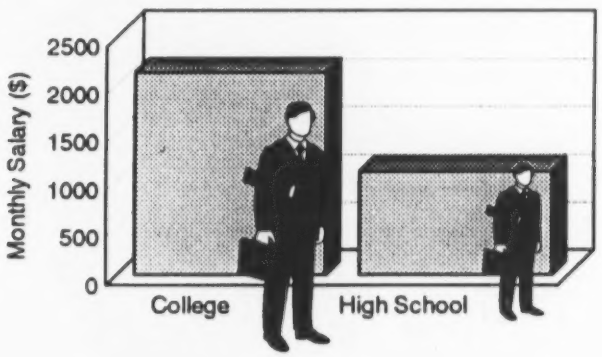
Most institutions enroll students with a variety of characteristics, aspirations and circumstances. And, of course, even traditional students with the highest probability of success can encounter financial, health, family or other personal problems over which neither they nor the college or university have much influence. Because the mix of student characteristics and circumstances varies from institution to institution, each college's experience in retaining its students should be examined internally to determine the best methods of improving success.

Each institution, with careful research and skillful analysis of the factors that are relevant to its own success with student retention, can adopt the most effective strategies to improve its retention and graduation rates. But, with the dynamics of student persistence so complex and varied, what are the incentives that make the effort to improve retention worthwhile?

Success in student retention has significant and lasting benefits for the institution, the state and the student. There is a direct economic benefit to an institution in retaining a student who has already been admitted. Not only is the student's tuition income retained, but the cost of recruiting a replacement is avoided. Retention also contributes to enrollment growth by

helping to insure a net gain in the balance between student recruitment and student attrition. Strong student retention also confirms an institution's effectiveness in performing its primary higher education mission.

For the State of Georgia, student retention represents financial savings and efficiency, a stronger system of higher education, and better-educated, more adaptable citizens who will make a greater contribution to the Georgia work force and the economy. Students who persist in their college studies also gain many advantages. A recent U.S Census Bureau report shows that, on the average, baccalaureate degree holders earn $2,116 per month, 96 percent more than high school graduates.



College not only prepares students for more productive careers and the improved quality of life that an enhanced economic status provides, but also enriches their personal lives through a broadened perspective on the state, the nation and the world. In the final analysis, the greatest incentive to invest time and effort in studying and improving student retention may be the academic success of even a single student who would have been lost to higher education through attrition. It is safe to assume that every institution in the University System has at least a few students on the margin who can be retained in the higher education mainstream by the appropriate combination of retention efforts.

Why Do Students Leave College?

The literature on student retention makes it clear that there are many factors that affect student retention. Lenning, Beal and Sauer organize retention factors into the following

categories: student characteristics, institutional characteristics, interaction between student and institution, and external factors:

Student Characteristics

Academic Factors: High school GPA and class rank; academic aptitude; study habits; first-quarter grades;

Demographic Factors: Age; sex; socioeconomic status; ethnicity;

Aspirations and Motivation: Level of degree aspiration; transfer plans; commitment; peer-group influence; vocational and occupational goals; satisfaction/dissatisfaction;

Financial Factors: student concern about finances; financial aid; employment.

Institutional Characteristics

Objective Environment: image; public vs. private; religious affiliation; cost; housing; student services; mission and role of the college;

Student Involvement: extracurricular activities; close friends; student-faculty relationships; academic programs;

Administrative Policies and Procedures.

Interactions

Student Fit or Lack of Fit with Institution: moral and social integration; meaningful student-faculty contact; student interrelationships; institutional responsiveness to student needs.

External Forces and Variables

The Economy

The Job Market

Social Forces

Susan Cooper Cowert (ACT, 1987) lists the following campus and student characteristics as the most important factors in student retention. The same factors also are listed in *What Works in Student Retention* (Beal and Noel, ACT/NCHEMS, 1980), and they also are cited elsewhere in the literature. The factors are listed below in the order of responses obtained by AASCU; ACT/NCHEMS average ratings are shown in parentheses:

Negative

Inadequate academic advising (1)

Conflict between class schedule and job (4)

Inadequate financial aid (9)
Inadequate counseling support system (7)
Inadequate personal contact between students and faculty (2)

Positive
Caring attitude of faculty and staff (1)
Consistent high quality of teaching (3)
Adequate financial aid programs (2)
Consistent high quality of academic advising (5)
Encouragement of student involvement in campus life (4)

Drop-out Potential
Low academic achievement (1)
Limited educational aspirations (2)
Inadequate financial resources (3)
Indecision about major or career (4)
Economically disadvantaged (5)

Lenning, et al, caution the reader that: "Although there are some hazards in interpreting student-reported reasons for dropping out, an institutions can learn a great deal from them. Whether or not the students' perceptions are accurate, they represent variables in the development of the dropout rationale that also may be operating for persisting students who, with a combination of factors, may become dropouts."

Factors affecting student retention vary in their perceived or measured impact by type of institution. For example, Beal and Noel report that, of 17 separate attrition factors, "conflict between class and job" has the highest average rating among two-year public colleges, but is rated 16th for 4-year private institutions. In addition to variation by institution type, each individual institution has its own unique pattern of student, faculty and institutional characteristics to address.

Most University System institutions regularly survey their students in an effort to identify the primary causes of attrition. The causes of attrition presented in their 1993 Student Retention and Graduation reports reflect those found in the literature. The following list is not in rank order, since the ranking of factors varies greatly from institution to institution. In fact, each of the first four causes listed below is the leading cause of attrition reported by at least one System institution:

1. Financial concerns
2. Unrealistic expectations about college
3. Student took a full-time job
4. Student wanted to transfer
5. Uncertainty about career
6. Uncertainty about major
7. Quality of teaching
8. Poor faculty-student relations
9. Ineffective or unavailable advising
10. Lack of social fit at institution
11. Negative experience with administrative units
12. Lack of academic and coping skills
13. Failure to use tutoring and counseling services
14. Family problems
15. Illness

Each institution can maximize the benefit it obtains from its student retention programs by conducting research to determine which factors and in what combination are critical to its retention success. While not all causes of attrition can be alleviated by direct institutional effort, enough can be to make the effort worthwhile.

How is the University System Doing in Student Retention?

Because there are many ways to calculate and study student retention, no completely reliable "national" retention or graduation rates exist for comparison with the rates of University System institutions. It is possible, however, to make a rough estimate of System institutions' success in this area by reference to studies that have been undertaken elsewhere.

One such study was performed by Oscar F. Porter using data from a U.S. Department of Education survey, *High School and Beyond*, and a 1986 follow-up survey. Among Porter's findings: 43 percent of full-time students entering a public sector four-year college immediately after high school completed a bachelor's degree within six years of high school. The comparable 6-year bachelor's degree graduation rate for full-time, first-time students entering a University System four-year college or university in Fall 1984 is 45 percent Systemwide, i.e., graduating from the matriculating institution or any other unit of the University System. Only four System institutions, Georgia Tech, University of Georgia, North Georgia College and

Georgia Southern University, had Systemwide 6-year graduation rates higher than 43 percent. The range among institutions was from 23 percent at Savannah State College to 68 percent at Georgia Tech.

The Porter study also reports a 6-year persistence (i.e., retention) rate of 55 percent. The comparable 6-year retention rate for University System senior colleges and universities is 56 percent, and the range among System institutions for the 1984 class is from 32 percent at Albany State College to 78 percent at Georgia Tech.

In his 1987 book, *Leaving College*, Vincent Tinto estimates that "roughly 61 percent" of the entering class will eventually complete a four-year college degree. That rate is higher than most estimates found in the literature. Although the time-frame of Tinto's study is not specified, it may be as long as 12 years. For the University System, nine years after matriculation, 62 percent of the 1984 class of first-time full-time regularly admitted senior college and university freshmen had received a bachelor's degree, Systemwide. Only six System institutions graduated 61 percent or more of their 1984 freshmen during that period: Georgia Tech, University of Georgia, Georgia Southern University, Fort Valley State College, Georgia College, and North Georgia College.

In 1989, Eric L. Dey and Alexander Astin published a study titled *Predicting College Student Retention*. That study reports a "public university" four-year retention rate of 41.7 percent and a "public four-year college" rate of 37.8 percent. The nearest comparable bachelor's graduation rates calculated for the University System are five-year rates, and, based on data for the class of 1984, all of the System universities and 11 of its 13 senior colleges exceed the respective rates reported by Astin.

Table 1 on the following page presents the retention and graduation rates of other state systems and institutions as benchmarks with which to gauge the University System's senior college and university performance in this area:

Table 1

Comparative System and Institutional Student Retention and Graduation Rates

	Retention Rates		Graduation Rates	
	First-Year	Nine-Year	Five-Year	Nine-Year
University of North Carolina System	78.4%	55.9%	46.4%	54.8%
California State University System	77.4%	54.2%	29.7%	51.1%
University of Wisconsin System	76.5%	56.2%	48.8%	53.9%
State University of New York System*		57.4%		55.7%
University System of Georgia	78.9%	56.4%	35.5%	51.9%
UNC - Chapel Hill	88.9%	78.5%	71.7%	78.0%
UW - Madison**		79.4%		74.9%
University of Georgia	89.1%	74.8%	56.4%	71.9%
Georgia Tech	88.1%	77.8%	51.5%	75.1%

* Rates shown for SUNY are "6-year plus" retention rates and 7-year graduation rates.

** Rates shown for UW-Madison are 7-year retention rates and 6-year graduation rates.

Overall senior college and university retention and graduation rates and those of the two highest performing System universities in this area are comparable to the out-of-state rates cited in this section. Although some System institutions exceed various out-of-state benchmarks, many others do not fare well in such comparisons. In addition, institutional retention and graduation data show disparities between developmental studies students and regularly admitted freshmen and between black and white students that indicate opportunities for improvement.

Reliable national retention and graduation rates for two-year colleges are unavailable; even the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) does not maintain national retention and graduation statistics. One reason given for this lack of comparable data is the wide variety of options other than persistence to an associate's or a bachelor's degree that are available to students beginning college at a two-year institution. This makes it difficult to identify the "typical" two-year college student or two-year college experience, or even to define student retention for that sector of higher education. Another reason for the lack of comparative statewide or national retention data is the difficulty of tracking the large number of students who transfer from two-year colleges to four-year colleges and universities; the University System is relatively unique in having all levels of institutions included in a single Student Information Reporting System.

Section 2
First-Year Retention of First-Time Full-Time Students

One measure of the University System's retention of its undergraduate students is the percentage who return the fall quarter following matriculation. The first-year retention rate is important because some studies have shown that more students leave college between the first and second years than at any other point.

First-Year Retention Rates by Institution

Tables 2 and 3 present the first-year senior college and university and two-year college student retention rates, respectively, by institution for three different fall to fall, one-year periods, 1988-1989, 1990-1991 and 1992-1993. The *same institution* rates in the first three columns represent each institution's level of success for those years in re-enrolling the respective fall quarter's first-time full-time students in the following fall quarter. The *Systemwide* rates in the next three columns represent retention anywhere in the System by those same students. Figure 2 shows that the aggregated *Systemwide* first-year retention rates are approximately eight percent higher than the corresponding *same institution* rates.

Figure 2 - Total System First-Year Retention Rates

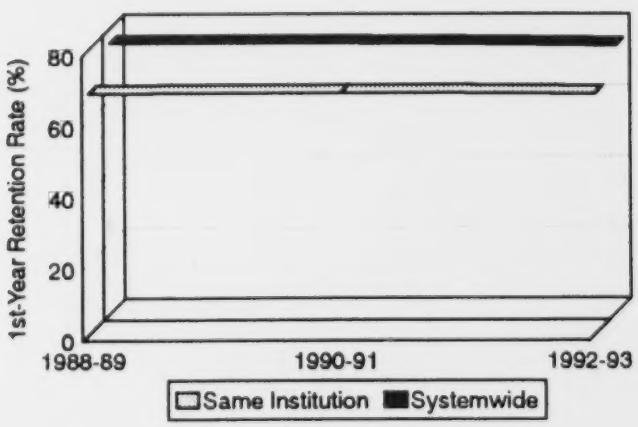


Table 2 reveals the following characteristics of System senior college and university first-year retention, by institution:

1. The range in first-year retention rates at the *same institution* is from 51 percent at Clayton State College in 1992-93 to over 86 percent at Georgia Tech in both 1990-91 and 1992-93. Measuring first-year retention *Systemwide*, rates range from 63 percent for Clayton State College in 1992-93 to more than 91 percent at the University of Georgia in the same year.

2. First-year retention is generally highest at residential System universities, next highest at regional universities, and then at residential senior colleges. That relationship pertains for both *same institution* and *Systemwide* rates, although there are several exceptions where individual institutions in one group have higher rates than some institutions in a collectively higher group.

3. For the years shown in Table 2, there is not a pattern of steady growth or decline in either *same institution* or *Systemwide* retention rates for most senior colleges and universities and for that institutional group as a whole. However, the following five System institutions did have a steady increase for the years shown in one or both types of retention: Georgia Tech, UGA, Albany State College, Armstrong State College, and Savannah State College.

4. Variation in first-year retention rates is greater between institutions than between entering classes.

Table 3 shows the following about System two-year college first-year retention, by institution:

1. The range in first-year retention rates at the *same institution* is from 46 percent at Waycross College in 1992-93 to over 65 percent at Gainesville College in 1992-93. Measuring first-year retention *Systemwide*, rates range from 51 percent for Atlanta Metropolitan College in 1992-93 to more than 75 percent at Middle Georgia College in both 1988-89 and 1992-93.

2. First-year retention is generally lower for two-year colleges than for either senior colleges or universities, although there are several exceptions. That general rule pertains for both *same institution* and *Systemwide* rates.

TABLE 2

FIRST-YEAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES
SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
1988-89, 1990-91 AND 1992-93 - SAME INSTITUTION AND SYSTEMWIDE
TOTAL FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS

	First-Year Retention Rates (Percent)					
	Same Institution			Systemwide		
Institution*	88-89	90-91	92-93	88-89	90-91	92-93
GEORGIA TECH	83.4	86.2	86.2	88.5	90.0	90.4
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	67.3	65.8	69.4	77.2	75.3	75.9
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA	81.8	83.1	85.6	88.5	89.9	91.3
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY	69.4	69.9	68.8	80.8	82.0	80.2
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY	64.0	68.5	66.3	73.1	76.0	75.7
ALBANY STATE COLLEGE	59.9	67.8	69.5	66.1	73.6	74.8
ARMSTRONG STATE COLLEGE	62.9	64.1	64.2	71.0	70.3	69.0
AUGUSTA COLLEGE	69.0	63.9	62.3	71.3	69.9	67.1
CLAYTON STATE COLLEGE	55.4	56.7	50.8	62.7	61.3	60.9
COLUMBUS COLLEGE	59.8	70.2	61.8	64.5	72.5	63.9
FORT VALLEY STATE COLLEGE	69.8	68.2	70.7	74.3	73.2	75.2
GEORGIA COLLEGE	65.4	65.2	63.5	76.7	78.1	73.6
GEORGIA SO'WESTERN COLLEGE	57.2	73.6	69.1	69.2	81.8	78.5
KENNESAW STATE COLLEGE	70.4	65.2	70.6	75.5	73.6	76.6
NORTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	74.1	71.6	75.5	84.8	84.8	87.3
SAVANNAH STATE COLLEGE	54.4	57.4	61.9	60.9	63.3	69.9
SOUTHERN TECH	62.1	56.3	67.0	76.3	69.5	79.0
WEST GEORGIA COLLEGE	57.3	57.1	57.8	73.9	74.0	70.9
SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	70.1	71.2	71.1	78.7	79.7	78.9

* Medical College of Georgia not included because of its low number of first-time full-time freshmen.

TABLE 3

FIRST-YEAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES
TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

1988-89, 1990-91 AND 1992-93 - SAME INSTITUTION AND SYSTEMWIDE
TOTAL FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS

	First-Year Retention Rates (Percent)					
	Same Institution			Systemwide		
Institution*	88-89	90-91	92-93	88-89	90-91	92-93
ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRIC. COLL.	59.8	55.1	56.8	68.6	62.9	67.0
ATLANTA METROPOLITAN COLL.	49.4	48.6	50.0	53.1	51.4	50.6
BAINBRIDGE COLLEGE	55.2	52.1	60.8	59.0	58.8	66.9
BRUNSWICK COLLEGE	54.0	56.3	53.4	58.4	60.5	56.5
DALTON COLLEGE	60.3	60.4	63.3	66.0	63.6	64.9
DARTON COLLEGE	60.0	61.8	59.2	67.9	66.4	63.9
DEKALB COLLEGE	59.4	60.8	60.7	65.5	64.8	66.6
EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE	59.5	64.9	51.9	66.2	68.0	57.8
FLOYD COLLEGE	58.1	58.3	55.7	61.6	61.8	61.6
GAINESVILLE COLLEGE	61.4	62.8	65.3	69.0	68.7	72.4
GORDON COLLEGE	60.9	60.3	57.9	73.1	69.4	67.3
MACON COLLEGE	61.1	58.6	53.7	66.7	68.1	61.1
MIDDLE GEORGIA COLLEGE	63.9	58.7	58.3	75.5	69.5	75.5
SOUTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	59.0	59.9	57.2	66.5	67.2	65.3
WAYCROSS COLLEGE	48.5	53.9	46.4	60.4	68.0	56.9
TWO-YEAR COLLEGES	54.4	58.9	58.2	66.6	65.0	65.4

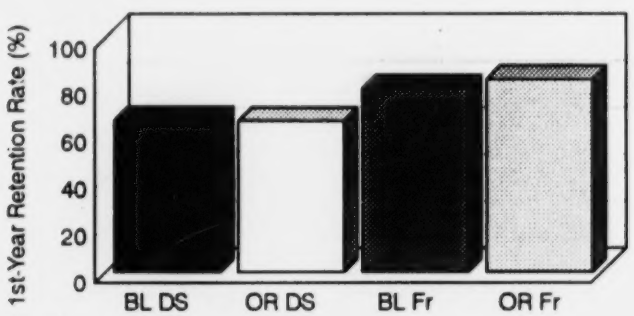
3. For the years shown in Table 3, only Dalton College and Gainesville College show consistent patterns of growth in student retention rates, both in the *same institution* category.

4. Variation in retention rates is greater between institutions than between entering classes.

Institutional First-Year Retention Rates by Race and Admission Status

Tables 4 and 5 compare the 1992-93 *Systemwide* first-year retention rates of four sub-groups of first-time full-time entering senior college and university and two-year college students: black and other developmental studies students and black and other freshmen, by institution. Figure 3 compares the respective overall first-year retention rates of these four student groups and shows that the greater differences in retention are between the developmental studies (DS) and freshman (Fr) admission categories.

Figure 3 - Total System First-Year Retention by Race and Admission Status



The institutional rates in Table 4 show the following:

1. As illustrated in the preceding bar graph, the System Total, first-year retention rates of black and other developmental studies students are just over one percentage point apart, and the corresponding rates for regularly admitted freshmen are within approximately 4 percentage points of one another.

TABLE 4

SYSTEMWIDE FIRST-YEAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES BY INSTITUTION, RACE AND ADMISSION STATUS SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Total First-Time Full-Time Students - 1992-93

Institution	Developmental Studies		Regularly Admitted Freshmen	
	Black	Other Race	Black	Other Race
GEORGIA TECH	100.0	50.0	93.6	90.2
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	77.5	80.2	66.2	74.1
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA	87.5	86.5	90.4	91.6
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY	78.9	74.3	82.8	82.8
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY	71.2	63.1	75.8	80.8
ALBANY STATE COLLEGE	73.7	50.0	76.5	66.7
ARMSTRONG STATE COLLEGE	52.3	73.2	48.6	72.2
AUGUSTA COLLEGE	45.8	60.4	76.5	76.9
CLAYTON STATE COLLEGE	56.6	55.0	62.5	69.3
COLUMBUS COLLEGE	43.2	54.0	62.1	74.5
FORT VALLEY STATE COLLEGE	72.2	50.0	83.0	N/A
GEORGIA COLLEGE	59.8	68.9	82.6	84.1
GEORGIA SO'WESTERN COLLEGE	80.0	67.5	78.1	82.7
KENNESAW STATE COLLEGE	53.3	68.3	91.7	79.4
NORTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	75.0	79.1	71.4	88.6
SAVANNAH STATE COLLEGE	66.7	87.5	77.5	40.0
SOUTHERN TECH	65.6	85.2	80.0	79.5
WEST GEORGIA COLLEGE	66.1	62.5	77.9	76.9
SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	69.8	68.6	79.9	84.3

* Medical College of Georgia is not included because of its low number of first-time full-time freshmen.

2. The aggregate first-year retention rate disparities between black developmental studies students and black freshmen and between other developmental studies students and other freshmen are both comparatively large, 10.1 and 15.7 percentage points, respectively.

3. The relative closeness of the rates *within* admission categories and the much larger differences *between* admission categories indicate that students' academic preparedness at admission has more impact on first-year retention than race.

4. The same general pattern exists at the majority of University System senior colleges and universities. The only exceptions are Armstrong State College and North Georgia College, where the disparity between races within both admission categories is greater than that between admission categories (although North Georgia enrolled a total of only 11 black students, less than 3 percent of the Fall 1992 entering class).

5. It is important to note that almost 62 percent of first-time full-time black students in the Fall 1992 entering class at senior colleges and universities were admitted in developmental studies, compared with just 23 percent of the white members of that entering class.

The two-year college rates in Table 5 show the following:

1. As with senior colleges and universities, the overall two-year college first-year retention rate disparities between admission categories are comparatively large, i.e., 17.9 percent between black developmental studies students and black freshmen and 15.6 percent between other developmental studies students and other freshmen.

2. The relative closeness of the rates *within* admission categories (i.e., approximately 8 and 6 percent, respectively) compared to the much larger differences *between* admission categories indicate that academic preparedness is more relevant than race at two-year colleges as at senior colleges and universities.

TABLE 5

SYSTEMWIDE FIRST-YEAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES BY INSTITUTION, RACE AND ADMISSION STATUS TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

Total First-Time Full-Time Students - 1992-93

Institution	Developmental Studies		Regularly Admitted Freshmen	
	Black	Other Race	Black	Other Race
ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRIC. COLL.	52.1	62.1	57.1	83.0
ATLANTA METROPOLITAN COLL.	42.7	40.0	84.0	100.0
BAINBRIDGE COLLEGE	33.3	71.4	76.5	67.9
BRUNSWICK COLLEGE	50.0	54.2	47.1	62.8
DALTON COLLEGE	100.0	60.3	0.0	66.9
DARTON COLLEGE	45.6	62.2	70.8	79.1
DEKALB COLLEGE	59.6	62.4	71.1	76.7
EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE	20.0	61.9	50.0	73.3
FLOYD COLLEGE	53.8	57.1	66.7	70.6
GAINESVILLE COLLEGE	64.3	63.8	80.0	83.5
GORDON COLLEGE	61.0	57.6	85.2	72.6
MACON COLLEGE	47.1	52.3	50.0	72.9
MIDDLE GEORGIA COLLEGE	50.0	61.9	95.8	85.9
SOUTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	56.5	51.3	81.3	79.1
WAYCROSS COLLEGE	42.9	42.7	60.0	78.0
TWO-YEAR COLLEGES	51.3	59.7	69.2	75.3

3. There are only four two-year colleges for which the disparity between races within one or both admission categories is greater than that between categories, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Brunswick College, East Georgia College and Macon College.

4. It should be noted that 79 percent of first-time full-time black students in the collective two-year college Fall 1992 entering class were admitted in developmental studies, compared with 48 percent of the white members of that class.

SECTION 3
MULTIPLE-YEAR RETENTION OF FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS

Multiple-year student retention rates track a single entering class of first-time full-time entering students from fall quarter to fall quarter for several years. The retention rate declines over time at most institutions to a point where there is virtually no change from year to year. At that point, the proportion that is retained consists almost entirely of graduates. Until that point, the retention rate will fluctuate as students move in and out of the System in succeeding fall quarters.

Multiple-Year Retention Rates by Institution

Multiple-year retention pertains to the long term persistence of members of a single entering class. Thus, Tables 6 and 7 present the *same institution* and *Systemwide* multiple-year retention rates for the first, fifth and ninth fall quarters following Fall 1984 for members of the class that first enrolled at a senior college or university or at a two-year college, respectively, in that quarter. Figure 4 illustrates for all University System institutions the decline in retention from the first through the fifth and ninth years after entry, as well as the relationship of *same institution* to *Systemwide* rates, with the latter rates higher by a margin that increases over time.

Figure 4 - Total System Multiple-Year Retention Rates

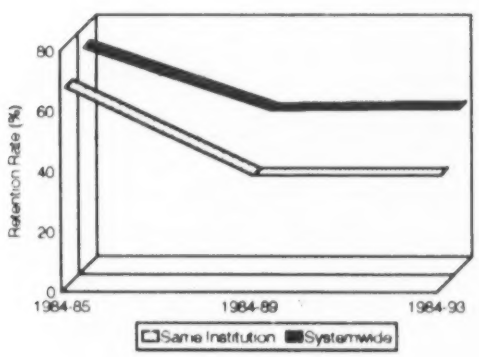


TABLE 6

ONE-, FIVE- AND NINE-YEAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES
SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

FALL 1984 ENTERING CLASS - SAME INSTITUTION AND SYSTEMWIDE
TOTAL FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS

	Same Institution			Systemwide		
	Fall 1984 Through Fall:			Fall 1984 Through Fall:		
Institution*	1985	1989	1993	1985	1989	1993
GEORGIA TECH	83.7	67.6	68.1	88.1	77.5	77.8
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	71.2	37.4	35.8	76.9	46.9	46.1
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA	84.5	61.6	63.0	89.1	73.9	74.8
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY	65.7	42.2	43.1	77.6	58.6	58.4
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY	61.8	37.4	38.4	70.5	48.9	50.0
ALBANY STATE COLLEGE	63.1	28.1	28.4	68.0	33.9	35.3
ARMSTRONG ST. COLLEGE	59.1	25.6	25.1	66.9	47.3	48.1
AUGUSTA COLLEGE	62.7	30.8	29.5	66.7	43.9	43.5
CLAYTON STATE COLLEGE	55.9	19.5	16.8	60.4	41.4	39.6
COLUMBUS COLLEGE	65.1	30.9	32.4	68.9	36.2	39.2
FORT VALLEY STATE COLLEGE	67.0	34.3	30.3	70.5	37.8	33.8
GEORGIA COLLEGE	66.5	38.7	38.7	74.4	52.9	53.4
GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE	56.2	29.0	29.9	64.6	46.4	47.2
KENNESAW STATE COLLEGE	64.9	28.8	30.2	72.6	40.6	41.6
NORTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	75.1	46.0	47.1	84.9	68.0	69.8
SAVANNAH STATE COLLEGE	64.6	29.8	31.5	69.2	34.8	36.4
SOUTHERN TECH	61.0	36.4	35.3	72.5	50.1	48.8
WEST GEORGIA COLLEGE	51.0	27.5	28.3	65.1	46.9	47.9
SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	69.4	42.9	43.2	76.5	56.0	56.4

* Medical College of Georgia is not included because of its extremely low number of first-time full-time entering freshmen.

The rates in Table 6 reveal the following characteristics of senior college and university multiple-year retention:

1. From Fall 1985 through Fall 1993, *same institution* student retention rates for the entering class of 1984 declined by as little as one-fifth (i.e., from 83.7% to 68.1%) at Georgia Tech to more than three-fourths (i.e., from 55.9% to 16.8%) at Clayton State College. When multiple-year retention rates are calculated *Systemwide*, Georgia Tech again has the lowest decrease over nine years, from 88.1 to 77.8 percent, and Fort Valley State the highest, from 70.5 to 33.8 percent.

2. Over multiple years, universities retain the highest percentage of students, followed by regional universities and senior colleges. North Georgia College is an exception to that pattern, with both *same institution* and *Systemwide* retention rates that are higher than both of the regional universities and one of the universities for all three periods shown in Table 6. Several other senior colleges also have higher rates than one of the universities or regional universities for one or more of the years shown.

3. By the ninth year after matriculation, ninety-six percent of the students who are counted as retained by the *same institution* have graduated from that institution, i.e., only four percent of those counted as retained after nine years are still enrolled at the institution without having graduated.

4. *Systemwide* retention rates are, by definition, larger than *same institution* rates since they represent retention at the same institution *plus* retention elsewhere in the University System.

5. After nine years, the following institutions experienced the largest differences between their *same institution* and their *Systemwide* retention rates: Georgia Southwestern, West Georgia College, Armstrong State College, and Clayton State College. An unusually large differential between *Systemwide* and *Same Institution* retention rates has implications both for an institution's mission and its student retention programs.

TABLE 7

ONE-, FIVE- AND NINE-YEAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES
TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

FALL 1984 ENTERING CLASS - SAME INSTITUTION AND SYSTEMWIDE
TOTAL FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS

	Same Institution			Systemwide		
	Fall 1984 Through Fall:			Fall 1984 Through Fall:		
Institution*	1985	1989	1993	1985	1989	1993
ABRAHAM BALDWIN AG. COLLEGE	58.4	20.4	19.6	64.4	44.0	45.4
ATLANTA METRO. COLLEGE	52.7	14.0	14.0	57.0	24.7	23.7
BAINBRIDGE COLLEGE	50.0	15.5	17.9	59.5	45.2	46.4
BRUNSWICK COLLEGE	56.6	20.8	22.6	61.8	41.0	46.2
DALTON COLLEGE	59.1	15.7	16.5	63.9	34.3	37.8
DARTON COLLEGE	57.8	18.0	19.3	64.8	39.4	42.5
EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE	61.6	16.4	13.7	68.5	47.9	47.9
FLOYD COLLEGE	44.5	14.3	13.2	52.2	28.0	30.2
GAINESVILLE COLLEGE	55.5	10.8	10.6	59.5	40.0	42.8
GORDON COLLEGE	53.4	12.0	13.5	62.0	38.0	39.4
MACON COLLEGE	55.9	17.9	17.6	62.9	40.7	40.7
MIDDLE GEORGIA COLLEGE	60.3	12.0	13.1	73.5	52.8	55.9
SOUTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	61.4	13.2	12.3	67.3	37.3	40.0
WAYCROSS COLLEGE	46.1	12.2	7.0	57.4	40.9	43.5
TWO-YEAR COLLEGES	54.5	15.6	15.5	61.2	40.1	42.0

* DeKalb College is not included because it was not a unit of the University System in 1984, the base year of this table.

The rates in Table 7 show the following about two-year college multiple-year retention:

1. From Fall 1985 to Fall 1989, overall *same institution* student retention rates for the two-year college entering class of 1984 declined from 54.5 percent to 15.5 percent, reflecting the two-year college transfer mission of those institutions.

2. The two-year college *Systemwide* fifth-year rates, which are from two to more than four and one-half times the corresponding *same institution* rates, further reflect the transfer mission of the two-year college.

3. The six two-year colleges whose students persisted, *Systemwide*, at the highest rates from 1984 to 1993, were: Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Bainbridge College, Brunswick College, East Georgia College, Middle Georgia College and Waycross College.

Multiple-Year Retention Rates by Institution, Race and Admission Status

Figure 5 shows the relationship of the aggregate nine-year retention rates for black developmental studies students, other developmental studies students, black freshmen and other freshmen, by institution. It shows that by the ninth year after entry, the difference between black and white retention rates within admission categories is greater than in the first year, but still much lower than the corresponding disparity between admission categories.

Figure 5 - Total System Multiple-Year Retention by Race and Admission Status

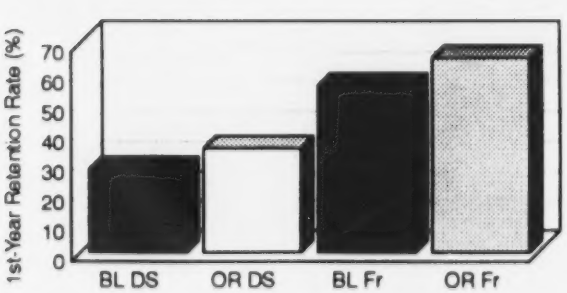


TABLE 8

SYSTEMWIDE NINE-YEAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES BY INSTITUTION, RACE AND ADMISSION STATUS SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

TOTAL FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS - 1984-93

Institution	Developmental Studies		Regularly Admitted Freshmen	
	Black	Other Race	Black	Other Race
GEORGIA TECH	27.3	71.4	66.0	79.0
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	22.6	40.7	50.7	57.4
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA	41.5	60.1	68.0	77.3
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY	78.9	74.3	82.8	82.8
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY	37.0	28.2	62.0	54.6
ALBANY STATE COLLEGE	35.2	40.0	33.3	50.0
ARMSTRONG STATE COLLEGE	23.3	36.6	52.9	57.32
AUGUSTA COLLEGE	18.0	28.9	66.7	58.5
CLAYTON STATE COLLEGE	47.5	50.5	50.0	68.1
COLUMBUS COLLEGE	17.0	23.0	56.8	46.0
FORT VALLEY STATE COLLEGE	25.8	100.0	66.2	N/A
GEORGIA COLLEGE	28.4	46.5	63.0	67.5
GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE	35.0	26.2	62.1	59.3
KENNESAW STATE COLLEGE	11.1	27.3	50.0	56.4
NORTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	0.0	43.5	66.7	71.8
SAVANNAH STATE COLLEGE	31.7	25.0	46.1	75.0
SOUTHERN TECH	31.8	31.1	50.0	59.6
WEST GEORGIA COLLEGE	28.8	33.6	47.3	55.0
SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	29.9	36.4	58.4	67.1

* Medical College of Georgia not included because of its low number of first-time full-time freshmen.

The nine-year retention rates in Table 8 confirm that for all but two System senior colleges and universities, the retention rate differences between admission categories were greater than those between racial subgroups within categories. Georgia Tech and Clayton State College both had larger differences in 1984-1993 student retention between racial groups than between admission categories. However, it should be noted that black students comprised only 7.5 and 8.6 percent of those institutions' respective 1984 entering classes compared to a 1984 System average of 25 percent.

TABLE 9

SYSTEMWIDE NINE-YEAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES BY INSTITUTION, RACE AND ADMISSION STATUS TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

TOTAL FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS - 1984-93

Institution	Developmental Studies		Regularly Admitted Freshmen	
	Black	Other Race	Black	Other Race
ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRIC. COLL.	17.7	32.4	25.0	64.3
ATLANTA METROPOLITAN COLL.	21.4	50.0	29.6	100.0
BAINBRIDGE COLLEGE	37.5	31.8	60.0	56.19
BRUNSWICK COLLEGE	N/A	N/A	36.2	50.0
DALTON COLLEGE	33.3	25.0	N/A	46.3
DARTON COLLEGE	18.1	27.9	68.8	55.1
EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE	13.3	15.8	100.0	74.3
FLOYD COLLEGE	28.6	20.9	33.3	43.3
GAINESVILLE COLLEGE	5.6	35.4	33.2	58.9
GORDON COLLEGE	25.9	16.3	42.1	52.2
MACON COLLEGE	21.3	32.6	47.1	49.29
MIDDLE GEORGIA COLLEGE	18.8	42.5	62.5	64.6
SOUTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	15.8	39.4	60.0	47.5
WAYCROSS COLLEGE	40.0	40.0	N/A	56.0
TWO-YEAR COLLEGES	20.9	31.6	43.0	55.0

* DeKalb College is not included because it was not a unit of the University System in 1984, the base year of this table.

Table 9 presents two-year college data that again confirm that student admission status has a greater influence on retention than student race. However, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and Gainesville College, with respective black proportions of first-time full-time entering students of 12 and 5 percent, were exceptions to the rule.

SECTION 4
BACHELOR'S DEGREE GRADUATION OF FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS

Bachelor's degree graduation rates are calculated as the percentage of a particular fall quarter **senior college and university** entering class of first-time full-time students that has obtained a bachelor's degree within a specified number of years. The bachelor's graduation rates in this report are calculated for the fifth through the ninth years after college entry.

Two-year colleges are not included in this section of the report because the Student Information Reporting System does not identify students who first enroll in college with the intention of pursuing a bachelor's degree, and two-year colleges offer several educational options below the baccalaureate level. It is assumed to be more likely that first-time full-time senior college and university students enroll in college to pursue a bachelor's degree.

Bachelor's Graduation Rates by Institution

Figure 6 shows the respective relationships of the aggregate System five-year and nine-year, *same institution* and *Systemwide* bachelor's degree graduation rates for the Fall 1984 entering class. The gap between *Systemwide* and *same institution* graduation rates increased from 4.9 to 9.6 percent between the fifth and ninth years after matriculation.

Figure 6 - Total System Five and Nine-Year Graduation Rates

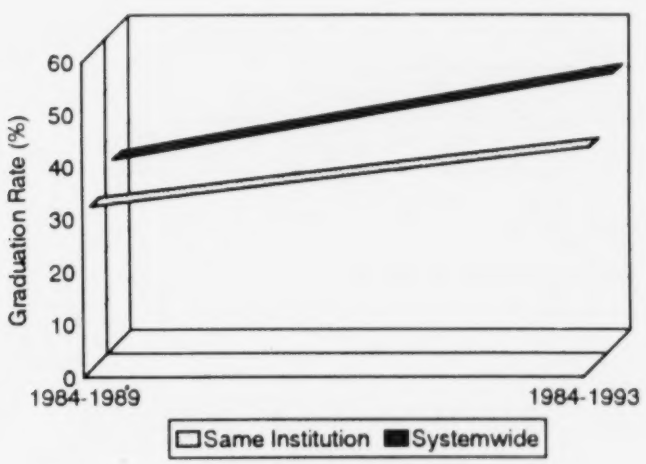


TABLE 10

BACHELOR'S DEGREE GRADUATION RATES - FIFTH, SEVENTH AND NINTH YEARS
SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

SAME INSTITUTION AND SYSTEMWIDE
TOTAL FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS

	Same Institution			Systemwide		
	Fall 1984 Through Summer:			Fall 1984 Through Summer:		
Institution*	1989	1991	1993	1989	1991	1993
GEORGIA TECH	48.8	66.0	67.5	51.5	72.1	75.1
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	18.6	29.0	32.7	21.2	34.2	38.5
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA	51.6	60.8	62.5	56.4	68.8	71.9
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY	31.4	40.4	42.2	37.5	50.0	54.1
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY	27.6	34.9	36.1	32.0	42.2	44.2
ALBANY STATE COLLEGE	16.3	26.4	26.4	16.8	27.3	28.9
ARMSTRONG ST. COLLEGE	11.0	16.7	18.4	20.2	33.7	37.5
AUGUSTA COLLEGE	15.1	22.0	23.7	21.1	31.7	34.8
COLUMBUS COLLEGE	18.5	26.1	28.1	20.8	29.9	32.9
FORT VALLEY STATE COLLEGE	17.3	27.0	29.0	17.5	28.0	30.8
GEORGIA COLLEGE	27.6	34.8	36.5	32.0	44.2	47.5
GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN COLL.	18.0	24.9	26.7	24.6	36.5	39.7
KENNESAW STATE COLLEGE	15.4	23.1	26.1	19.8	30.7	35.1
NORTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	41.5	44.7	45.2	53.2	60.3	63.5
SAVANNAH STATE COLLEGE	15.1	25.9	27.9	16.4	27.9	30.5
SOUTHERN TECH	12.5	30.4	32.2	14.5	37.7	41.6
WEST GEORGIA COLLEGE	19.3	25.5	26.8	26.0	38.4	41.5
SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	31.0	40.5	42.3	35.5	48.6	51.9

* Medical College of Georgia is not included because of its extremely low number of first-time full-time entering freshmen. Clayton State College did not offer bachelor's degrees in 1984.

The institutional rates in Table 10 reveal the following about senior college and university success in graduating their students:

1. Between the fifth and the ninth years after Fall 1984 matriculation, the aggregate senior college and university rate at which students graduated from their original institution increased by more than one third, from thirty-one percent to forty-two percent.

2. Over the same period, the aggregate Systemwide graduation rate increased by almost one-half, from thirty-five percent to fifty-two percent.

3. The largest *same institution* graduation rate increases were at Fort Valley State College, Savannah State College and Southern Tech; the largest increases *Systemwide* were at Armstrong State and Southern Tech.

4. By 1989, only two senior colleges, Georgia College and North Georgia College, had graduated more than one fourth of their Fall 1984 first-time full-time students. By 1993, only Georgia College, North Georgia College and Southern Tech had graduated 30 percent or more of those students.

5. When senior college graduation rates are calculated *Systemwide*, i.e., based on graduation anywhere in the System, only Georgia College, North Georgia College and West Georgia College had graduated 25 percent or more of their Fall 1984 entering class after five years. After nine years, only North Georgia College had a *Systemwide* graduation rate of 50 percent or higher, compared with an aggregate senior college and university rate of 52 percent.

Bachelor's Graduation Rates by Institution, Race and Admission Status

Figure 7 shows how the nine-year graduation rates of black developmental studies students, other developmental studies students, black freshmen and other freshmen, compare. Again, the greatest disparity is between developmental studies students and regularly admitted freshmen.

Figure 7 - Total System Graduation Rates by Race and Admission Status

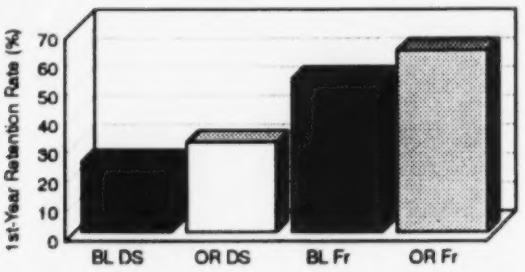


Table 11 shows the following about the institutional graduation rates in the University System:

1. Other race students in both the developmental studies and freshman admission categories graduate at a higher rate than black students at a majority of System institutions and for the System as a whole.

2. Valdosta State University and Georgia Southwestern College had higher black than other race nine-year graduation rates for developmental studies students. For the regularly admitted freshman subgroup, more than one-half of the senior colleges and universities had higher black than other race nine-year graduation rates.

3. Both the overall senior college and university and the majority of individual senior college graduation rates in Table 11 show that by the ninth year after matriculation, students of both racial groupings who entered as regularly admitted freshmen have graduated at more than twice the rate of the respective developmental studies students.

TABLE 11

SYSTEMWIDE BACHELOR'S DEGREE NINE-YEAR GRADUATION RATES BY INSTITUTION, RACE AND ADMISSION STATUS

TOTAL FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME STUDENTS - 1984-93

	Developmental Studies		Regularly Admitted Freshmen	
Institution	Black	Other Race	Black	Other Race
GEORGIA TECH	27.3	71.4	61.3	76.5
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	12.6	33.6	37.0	51.6
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA	30.2	56.8	64.6	74.7
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY	41.2	42.1	51.4	62.0
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY	28.8	24.4	55.7	48.8
ALBANY STATE COLLEGE	28.7	20.0	33.3	50.0
ARMSTRONG STATE COLLEGE	10.0	23.8	41.2	48.2
AUGUSTA COLLEGE	13.1	18.4	52.4	50.7
COLUMBUS COLLEGE	17.0	18.9	48.6	38.0
FORT VALLEY STATE COLLEGE	23.3	0.0	62.3	N/A
GEORGIA COLLEGE	25.7	36.1	63.0	62.3
GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE	26.7	22.6	55.2	50.0
KENNESAW STATE COLLEGE	0.0	21.6	50.0	49.4
NORTH GEORGIA COLLEGE	0.0	34.8	66.7	65.5
SAVANNAH STATE COLLEGE	25.5	25.0	41.6	50.0
SOUTHERN TECH	18.2	25.2	50.0	51.7
WEST GEORGIA COLLEGE	24.0	26.8	43.0	48.2
SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	24.3	31.1	53.1	62.9

* Medical College of Georgia not included because of its low number of first-time full-time freshmen. Clayton State College did not offer bachelor's degrees in 1984.

SECTION 5
STUDENT RETENTION PROGRAMS

As suggested in Section 1, the key to improved student retention lies in identifying the factors that most influence each institution's student retention success, especially those that can be modified by institutional efforts. All of the colleges and universities in the University System have programs designed to foster student retention. Those that are based on a careful analysis of *why* students leave have a much better chance of increasing the rate at which they stay and complete their college studies.

University System programs designed to improve student retention by counteracting the major causes of attrition range from orientation, to counseling, academic advising, financial aid and remedial/developmental education. In their 1993 student retention and graduation reports, the System institutions included the following descriptions of student retention programs. Some may be in operation at only a few institutions, others, like Developmental Studies and the Minority Advising Program, are common to all institutions in the System.

Developmental Studies Developmental Studies provides instruction in composition, reading and mathematics for students who do not pass the respective portion of the Collegiate Placement Exam. Students who are admitted to college with College Preparatory Curriculum deficiencies or admission test scores below the System or institutional minimums are required to take the CPE. In addition to instruction, developmental studies programs provide students with advisement, counseling and tutorial services.

Student Support Services This is a federally funded, Trio program of academic assistance for disadvantaged students. Students qualify for the program if they are financially disadvantaged, physically or learning disabled, or if they are first-generation college students. Services of the program include: orientation, mandatory advisement, counseling, required weekly study hall hours, personal growth seminars, tutorial assistance and a fifth-year degree completion program.

Minority Student Support There are a variety of programs designed to support minority student persistence in college. They are often administered by one office, e.g., the Office of African American Student Services and Programs at Georgia

State University, the Office of Minority Educational Development at Georgia Tech, and the Office of Minority Affairs at Southern Tech. Minority support programs include:

Summer Enrichment Program - Summer enrichment programs enroll prospective minority students for from one to four weeks the summer preceding matriculation to expose them to the college environment and instruct them in study skills, mathematics, composition, and reading. They are designed to increase students' confidence and improve their learning skills. Some programs include a follow-up mentoring component.

Minority Advising Program: Seeks to improve the retention of minority students through counseling, academic assistance including tutoring and study skills training, mentoring and peer counseling, help in obtaining financial aid, career counseling and motivational, personal development and cultural activities aimed especially at minority students who are at risk of dropping out of college.

Minority Honors and Special Academic Program: Programs that recruit highly qualified minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged students to a particular institution or program (e.g., the sciences).

Student Affairs/Academic Affairs Liaison: Programs or offices that create a link between the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Offices to provide programs and services in such areas as: cultural, ethnic and racial awareness, diversity appreciation, study skills, community service, degree completion, leadership training, organizational development and institutional resources.

Freshman Orientation: Freshman orientation programs are designed to familiarize entering students with the opportunities and demands of college life. Some orientation programs last one or two days, some a week, and some are designed in a non-credit, one quarter course format. Some orientation programs involve parents as well as students.

Peer Assistance Programs These programs employ more experienced students in providing assistance to new and at risk students, ranging from counseling to tutoring to general mentoring.

Academic Intervention Some institutions have policies that specify certain intervention measures when a student's GPA falls to a prescribed level. For example, when

freshman students' adjusted GPA is 1.50 or below, the following restrictions might be applied: they may enroll for no more than 13 credit hours; must enroll in a special study skills course; and must have regular meetings with an advisor until their GPA is above 1.50.

Counseling Centers

Such centers provide individual development and mental health services to help students handle their new-found independence, cope with stress, and deal with such issues as alcohol, drugs and sexuality. In many cases, counseling center programs involve staff and faculty in addition to counseling center personnel.

Honors Programs

Honors programs are designed to retain students with high academic potential by providing a stimulating and challenging educational experience. In addition to special academic programs and special status, honors students are often accorded such privileges as early registration, preferred scheduling, and academic counseling by members of a faculty honors program committee.

Academic Advisement

Academic advising programs not only provide guidance to students in choosing a degree major, selecting courses, and fulfilling degree requirements, but they also provide an opportunity to develop strong student-faculty relations. Both dimensions of academic advisement are critical to student retention and graduation success.

Financial Aid

Every institution has a student financial aid office that administers a variety of public and private loan, scholarship and grant programs for eligible students. In fact, in 1993 System institutions dispersed over $338 million in student aid. The role of these offices in student retention is critical in view of the prominent role in student attrition that is played by financial concerns.

SECTION 6
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The University System takes a proactive stance on student retention. That attitude is reflected in the variety of student retention programs that have been implemented and the studies of retention and attrition that have been conducted over the years. When aggregate Systemwide rates, which reflect the University System's statewide higher education mission, are examined, they are comparable to rates calculated in other parts of the country. The retention and graduation rates of several System institutions also compare favorably with those of appropriate out-of-state benchmark institutions.

However, averages for a system of institutions often conceal more than they reveal. Whereas a few System institutions have very high short- and long-term retention rates and graduation rates, there are even more institutions that have rates well below comparative benchmarks. For those institutions, a renewed commitment to research into specific causes of student attrition is necessary. Additional research into the empirical effectiveness of their retention programs also should be undertaken to insure that resources are not being wasted on efforts that do not fit the circumstances.

For most System institutions, the disparities between black students and white students within the same admission category do not present a critical problem. At some predominantly white institutions, black students are retained at even higher rates than white students. The greater retention and graduation rate disparities are between admission categories, indicating that a student's academic preparedness at admission has more influence on college persistence than his or her race.

However, at a few institutions retention and graduation rate disparities between white students and black students exceed those between admission status groups. In those cases, there also is a clear need for additional research and improved programs. In addition, despite the higher statistical probability that regularly admitted freshmen will persist in college, the retention and graduation rates of developmental studies students should be carefully monitored to insure that they are succeeding in college at the highest possible rates.

While the retention and graduation potential of different institutions varies according to unique combinations of factors, some of which are outside their control, no college or university should take student attrition for granted. All institutions should make retention success a fundamental operational goal and give it the attention necessary to insure an optimal level of success.